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Thirty-sixth session
3-28 June 1996 (Part I)

DRAFT REPORT

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives

1. At its 4th meeting, on 4 June 1996, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives (A/51/88, annex).

Discussion

2. Delegations observed that the report showed both progress made in improving evaluation and weaknesses that needed to be addressed and that this mixed picture applied to all aspects of programme oversight at the departmental level. Delegations considered that the linkage between evaluation findings and programme planning and budgeting remained a problem that needed to be addressed by both the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Department of Administration and Management. Delegations welcomed the commitment made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services to issue guidelines for oversight at the departmental level.

3. Some delegations welcomed the initiative by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean regarding the mechanism to systematically obtain

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independent evaluations of its publications, which many of its members have acknowledged as being very useful. Mention was also made of the important decisions taken at the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, in April 1996, to, inter alia, improve its indicators for evaluating Commission activities in terms of performance, productivity and impact; to establish an ad hoc working group to define priorities within the approved programme of the Commission; and to elaborate strategical directions for the future activities of the Commission.

4. Delegations expressed their concern over the very low rate of implementation of a number of programmes, in particular priority subprogrammes, as noted in paragraph 17 of the report. They also regretted that there was not enough information with regard to the reasons for postponing several activities or programmes.

Conclusions and recommendations

5. The Committee commended the report, which it found to be comprehensive and objective.

6. The Committee noted that the compressed cycle of the in-depth evaluation had increased evaluation coverage without sacrificing quality.

7. The Committee recommended to the General Assembly that the crime prevention and criminal justice and international drug control programmes be the subject of in-depth evaluations, and that reports thereon should be presented to the Committee at its thirty-eighth session, in 1998. These two topics have not been subject to in-depth evaluation.

8. The Committee encouraged the Office of Internal Oversight Services to develop guidelines on internal oversight within each unit at the departmental level, covering the following issues:

(a) Institutional arrangements for oversight, which in general should be centralized in one unit reporting to the head of the department;

(b) Minimum common standards, including, for all important publications, a requirement that the author department actively seek reviews in technical and specialized journals and, where appropriate, in the general press throughout the world;

(c) Training and other services to be provided by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Public Information

1. At its 6th to 8th meetings, on 5 and 6 June 1996, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Public Information, transmitted to it in a note by the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/1996/2).

Discussion

2. Many delegations found the report to be useful and were in general agreement with most of the recommendations contained therein. A number of delegations stated that the report lacked in-depth analyses. Several delegations stated that the report was a good starting point for the process of review of the Department of Public Information, but that, considering the findings, the recommendations could have been more forceful. Many delegations commended the excellent efforts of the Department during the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. They also noted the reference in the report to the reform efforts made by the Department in recent years, efforts that should be encouraged in order for the Department to fully accomplish the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly. One delegation welcomed the role played by the United Nations Information Centre operating in its capital, particularly

regarding the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Another delegation highlighted the statement in the report that a major element of the work programmes of the United Nations information centres related to the various United Nations observances, which, according to the Joint Inspection Unit, were of limited value. That delegation also indicated that an examination of the allocation of resources among the various activities in the work programmes of the information centres would be useful, with a view to determining the appropriate focus of the centres' activities.

3. Some delegations stated that the Committee on Information should have received and reviewed the evaluation prior to its consideration by the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Most delegations stated that efforts to improve the public image of the United Nations were crucial and that senior officials should participate positively in this regard. Several delegations stressed the need to ensure that information disseminated was neutral and balanced. A number of delegations stressed the need to give effective public information coverage to all priority areas approved by the General Assembly, particularly those related to development and international cooperation.

4. Regarding the question of mandates given to the Department of Public Information, some delegations stated that a review of the numerous mandates of the Department was required and requested that a full list of such mandates be provided by the Secretariat. A number of delegations considered that, without prejudice to priorities set by the General Assembly, the Department should draw up a list of the active mandates and propose an annual priority programme for consideration by the Committee on Information; other delegations considered that such information should be given in the context of the priorities set by the General Assembly in the medium-term plan and its revisions. One delegation stated that this programme should be flexible enough to accommodate unexpected events. With regard to the "Blue Boots", a number of delegations were concerned about the addition by the Secretariat of outputs without specific mandates which may involve, in some cases, substantial amounts of resources, including from peace-keeping operations budgets. Other delegations expressed appreciation for such outputs, which were found to be useful.

5. Several delegations stressed the importance of new technologies in disseminating information, and commended the Department for its initiatives in this area. Other delegations noted that the Department should facilitate access to information in countries where new technologies were not widespread, and should be mindful of technological gaps among Member States. Many delegations emphasized that access to United Nations documents through the use of new technology should not substitute for the distribution of printed documentation and should remain free of charge. In that connection, some delegations stressed the need for more active involvement of United Nations Development Programme offices, in cases where there was no United Nations information centre, in the process of dissemination of information about the United Nations. Other delegations noted that increased use of technology should bring savings in the longer term. Several delegations stressed the need to ensure that all publications were in all six official languages.

6. Many delegations stressed the need to establish standard procedures for countering criticism, as well as the importance of an established system to

determine the needs of target audiences. Many delegations expressed concern about the lack of quality control regarding United Nations publications and the continuing evidence of duplication in that area. Others expressed their satisfaction with those publications. Some delegations were concerned about the cost-efficiency of Library services. Several delegations stressed the continued usefulness of the services provided. Several delegations stated that those services should answer the needs of all users. Some delegations, recalling the programmatic and coordination focus of the Committee, stated that the issue of cost-effectiveness should not be the principal factor in its decisions. In that connection, they recalled the roles of the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions as bodies that deal with administrative and budgetary questions. Other delegations noted that if the Committee for Programme and Coordination was making recommendations with financial consequences, questions of cost-effectiveness were relevant. Some delegations felt that greater coordination in the delivery of Library and related services provided by the Secretariat was required.

7. Some delegations were pleased with the Department's statement that reviews of the operations of the United Nations information centres and the Dag Hammarkjöld Library, as called for in the draft resolution adopted by the Committee on Information in May, would address many of the concerns raised about those two programmes. Several delegations stressed the importance of United Nations information centres.

8. In the course of the debate, delegations made observations on a number of recommendations contained in the report.

9. Recommendations 1 and 2. A number of delegations considered that the recommendations should include explicit reference to "governmental" agencies of information, as stated in General Assembly resolution 13(I).

10. Recommendation 4. A number of delegations considered that the recommendation did not address many of the problems described in the report, in particular the weaknesses of feedback mechanisms and the work of the Programme Evaluation and Committee Liaison Unit. Some delegations stated that they could only accept recommendation 4.C on the understanding that the Secretariat had to publish all materials listed in the programme budget as approved by the General Assembly. Other delegations strongly supported the recommendation.

11. Recommendation 6. Some delegations had strong reservations on the development of a radio broadcasting capacity, stating that such capacity should be based on a demonstrated demand, and that its managerial and cost-benefit implications should be looked into before any decision was made. Other delegations, however, stressed that the needs and demands of developing countries should be taken into account in any cost-benefit approach. One delegation suggested that the United Nations could strengthen its relations with radio broadcasting stations of interested Member States with a view to providing information on United Nations matters.

12. Recommendation 9. Several delegations considered that the central role of the Spokesperson should not be compromised by direct access of the press to

United Nations senior officials. Other delegations considered it essential that such officials maintain an appropriate relationship with the press.

13. Recommendation 14. Many delegations had strong reservations on section B of this recommendation and felt its implementation could create a number of difficulties. Other delegations recalled that the Committee on Information, at its eighteenth session, in paragraph 12 of draft resolution B, welcomed the action taken by some Member States with regard to financial and material support to United Nations information centres in their respective capitals and invited the Secretary-General, through the Department of Public Information, to consult Member States, where appropriate, on the possibility of providing the centres with additional and voluntary support on a national basis.

14. Recommendations 15 and 16. Some delegations considered that these recommendations should be implemented taking into account the various national interests and contexts. Another delegation stressed the need to ensure that collaboration with non-governmental organizations strictly adhere to the requirements of the relevant General Assembly resolutions on the matter.

15. Recommendation 17. Several delegations questioned the use of extrabudgetary funds in this context and stated that the restriction of the recommendation to Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna was discriminatory with respect to guided visits. In this regard, one delegation requested the Department to look at the possibility of introducing guided visits to the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

16. Recommendation 20. Some delegations questioned the usefulness of establishing a revolving fund and made reservations thereon.

Conclusions and recommendations

17. The Committee recognized the importance of the Department's activities and expressed its appreciation for the report, which it found to be comprehensive.

18. The Committee endorsed recommendations 1 to 13, 14.A, 15, 16, 18 and 19, with the following modifications and understandings:

Recommendation 1

The words "established agencies of information" were replaced by the words "established governmental and non-governmental agencies of information";

Recommendation 2.B

The words "public and private information agencies" were replaced by the words "governmental and non-governmental information agencies";

Recommendation 4.C

On the understanding that the Secretariat will publish all materials listed in the programme budget as approved by the General Assembly;

Recommendations 15 and 16

On the understanding that these recommendations should be implemented taking into account the various national interests and contexts and that collaboration with non-governmental organizations would strictly adhere to the requirements of the relevant General Assembly resolutions on the matter.

19. The Committee decided that the report, together with its conclusions and recommendations thereon, should be transmitted to the Committee on Information at its nineteenth session for consideration and appropriate action. The Committee invites the extended bureau of the Committee on Information to follow up the recommendations endorsed above.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of peace-keeping operations: termination phase

1. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 3 and 4 June 1996, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of peace-keeping operations: termination phase (E/AC.51/1996/3, annex).

Discussion

2. Delegations agreed with the emphasis in the report on learning from experience, and considered that a systematic approach to building up and maintaining institutional memory was crucial and would generate savings in the future. Many delegations also noted that translating the lessons of experience into improved policies and procedures was important and required that regular, predictable financing should be provided to the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, as recommended by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations (A/51/130, para. 50). Other delegations considered that the appropriate concept was "predictable funding". Several delegations stated that the lessons learned in peace-keeping should be distributed in all official languages to all Member States and on a regular basis to all bodies concerned, including the Special Committee, for their consideration and approval. Several delegations stated that the "lessons learned" process should not be limited to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations but should apply to all departments and organizations involved.

3. Many delegations stated that the broad approach taken to the termination phase was helpful. Others considered that the report should have concentrated on the specific elements of the problems of the termination phase as such. Some delegations expressed their disappointment at the rather loose way in which that important subject had been addressed. Other delegations stated that greater consideration should have been given to drawing lessons from experience with the termination of problematic missions. Given the complex nature of the termination phase, delegations emphasized the importance of a coordinated framework to integrate the efforts of the various entities involved without prejudice to the different ways of funding the activities concerned. Some delegations welcomed the findings of the report on peace-building. Other delegations pointed out that the question of peace-building and related matters was being dealt with by other bodies, such as the General Assembly's Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace, stressed that there was currently no agreement on the question, and regretted its inclusion in the report. Several delegations stated that the proposed review of policy concerning the disposition of assets was timely; some considered that there was a need to apply a cost-benefit approach.

4. With regard to the major components enumerated in table 2 of the report, several delegations reiterated that there was no legislative basis for that listing of components. They deeply regretted the inclusion in the report of concepts which had not been approved by the General Assembly and were still being negotiated in the Working Group on An Agenda for Peace. Other delegations noted that since the components could be included in peace-keeping operations if the Security Council so mandated, and had been so included in the past, it was appropriate that they be listed and that capacity for action in those areas be maintained. Some delegations noted problems of translation in the Spanish version of table 2 and considered that the words intervención inmediata should be replaced by the words despliegue rápido. Some delegations strongly rejected the affirmation that civil society was the backbone of a political system, and stressed in that regard the central and important role that Government played in maintaining the political system in each country.

5. In the course of the debate, some delegations made observations on a number of the recommendations in the report.

6. Recommendation 1. Some delegations considered that the recommendation should include the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, to which the present report should be submitted.

7. Recommendation 3 (a). Some delegations considered that the following phrase should be added: "and present them for consideration and approval, as appropriate, to the relevant intergovernmental bodies, including the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations".

8. Recommendation 3 (c). Several delegations emphasized that the secondments proposed in the recommendation should be resorted to only if the regular and predictable financing recommended by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations in its report to the General Assembly was not forthcoming; other delegations expressed their concern about the implications of

recommendation 3 (c). They regretted the growing imbalance within the Department of Peace-keeping Operations between posts financed from the regular budget and the peace-keeping support account, and the number of military officers on loan. They also noted that the use of loaned personnel should be temporary, and urged the Secretary-General and the competent bodies of the General Assembly to take steps to correct the imbalance by providing necessary financing for posts currently occupied by officers on loan and by recruitment for those posts, in accordance with established procedures. They stressed that the planning function of activities of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations needed regular and predictable financing. In that context, they requested the Secretary-General to make every effort to ensure respect for the principle of equitable geographical representation. Other delegations noted the primary importance of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. Many delegations recalled the detailed report that the Secretary-General had to submit to the General Assembly on various aspects of the question, and expressed the view that the recommendation should be further discussed after the consideration of that report.

9. Recommendation 4. Several delegations proposed the deletion of the phrase "of multi-component peace-keeping missions". They also stressed that demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of uprooted populations were not activities to be implemented by the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, which did not have a mandate for them. Those delegations stressed that they agreed only to the general principle of designation of the centres but emphasized that evaluation of the above-mentioned activities was not within the Department's mandate, so that the recommendation should be elaborated, stressing that those activities were within the competence of such other bodies as UNHCR and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

10. Recommendations 6, 7, 9 and 11. Many delegations emphasized that, in the absence of agreement on the concepts, policies and practices relating to peace-building as an integral part of peace-keeping, or on the role and scope of involvement of UNDP in peace-keeping missions, discussions on the recommendations should await the outcome of the work of the Working Group on An Agenda for Peace. Those delegations rejected the concept of peace-building as an integral part of peace-keeping operations. Other delegations particularly welcomed the findings and recommendations of the report on peace-building. They stressed that peace-building should be an integral part of all peace-keeping operations and that failure to adopt a planned and coordinated approach to it risked squandering an often fragile peace and with it significant investments by the international community.

11. Recommendations 8, 10 and 13. Some delegations stated that any actions on those recommendations should be based on decisions of relevant intergovernmental bodies.

12. Recommendation 14 (c). Some delegations expressed the view that the proposed retention of military personnel to assist in securing the assets of a mission after the end of its political mandate would require the prior approval of the Security Council.

13. Recommendation 16. Some delegations cautioned that in implementing the recommendation care must be taken not to infringe upon national sovereignty, and proposed that the question of drafting guidelines for field operations in countries experiencing continuing civil strife should be examined by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations. Other delegations fully supported the recommendation.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. The Committee expressed appreciation for the report and agreed with the emphasis in the report on learning from experience.

15. The Committee endorsed recommendations 2, 5, 12, 14 (a) and (b) and 15 (b).

16. There was no agreement in the Committee on recommendations 3 (c), 6, 7, 9, 11 and 16. The Committee therefore recommended that they be examined further by the relevant intergovernmental bodies. With respect to recommendation 7, the Committee did not intend by that action to prohibit the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations from assessing experience with any mandated activities of completed peace-keeping missions.

17. The Committee endorsed recommendations 1, 3 (a) and (b), 4, 14 (c) and 15 (a) with the following modifications and understandings:

Recommendation 1

The words "the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations" were inserted before the words "and the Inter-Agency Working Group".

Recommendation 3

In the chapeau, the word "multi-component" was deleted.

Recommendation 3 (a)

The words "and present them for consideration and approval, as appropriate, to the relevant intergovernmental bodies, including the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations" were added at the end of the subparagraph.

Recommendation 4

The words "of multi-component peace-keeping missions" were deleted. With that change the recommendation was endorsed, on the understanding that that was an endorsement of the general principle of designation of responsibility centres and did not imply that the Department of Peace-keeping Operations had responsibility for any functions beyond those in its mandate.

Recommendation 14 (c). The words "with the prior approval of the Security Council" were added at the end of the first sentence.

Recommendation 15 (a)

The words "after a peaceful transfer of power to constituted government" and the words "and the continuing peace-building requirements of the new situation created by the mission" were deleted.

18. The Committee took note of recommendations 8, 10 and 13, on the understanding that any actions on those recommendations should be based on decisions of the relevant intergovernmental bodies.

19. The Committee requested that the report, together with the conclusions and the recommendations of the Committee on it, should be transmitted to the Informal Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on An Agenda for Peace, the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and other intergovernmental bodies addressing the questions raised in the report, for consideration and appropriate action.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-second session on the evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 4 June 1996, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-second session on the evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (E/AC.51/1996/4, annex).

Discussion

2. Delegations welcomed the report and found that it provided an informative statement of progress made by UNHCR to implement the recommendations made by the Committee. Many delegations stressed that such reviews were evidence of the usefulness of the work of the Committee; the report showed that its recommendations had helped UNHCR in improving its effectiveness. Generally, delegations were satisfied with progress in the cooperation of UNHCR with other

programmes and agencies of the United Nations system and with implementing partners. Some delegations expressed concern, however, about the lack of coordination in the field of programme implementation at the country level between UNHCR and UNDP resident coordinators.

3. One delegation expressed its support for the work of the inter-agency task force on internally displaced persons, established in 1993, and urged it to reach a consensus on a better mode of distribution of tasks. Another delegation stated that the attention paid by UNHCR to regional approaches to durable solutions, involving further development agencies, had been found useful. One delegation considered that there was a need to define a methodology for action during conflicts and in the post-conflict period. One delegation expressed the view that the comprehensive approach followed at the recent conference of the Commonwealth of Independent States was a useful model which could be applied in other regions. Another delegation stressed the importance of international solidarity with the countries hosting refugees and the need to share their burden.

4. It was noted by one delegation that the increase of flows from some regions and countries necessitated greater cooperation with both countries of origin and transit countries. Several delegations stated that cooperation should be expanded and formalized with a larger number of memoranda of understanding; some other delegations stated that cooperation and the conclusion of such memoranda should include organizations outside the United Nations system, such as the International Organization for Migration.

5. In the area of human rights, the collaboration of UNHCR with the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations system was noted; however, several delegations expressed disappointment that the memorandum of understanding with the Centre for Human Rights had not been finalized. Delegations were encouraged by the contribution of UNHCR to the system-wide early-warning system; a number were concerned, however, by the lack of a coherent international mechanism in the collection and dissemination of information. One delegation stressed that UNHCR would benefit from an early-warning capacity and, for that reason, had a responsibility in the development of an international mechanism. One delegation regretted that it was given no precise information on the development of the common working group.

6. Several delegations stressed, in regard to recommendation 6, that any agreement with non-governmental organizations in their relations with UNHCR should fully respect the relevant legislative basis.

7. Regarding programming and administrative controls, delegations noted the progress accomplished. Several delegations stressed that administrative controls of implementing partners should be strengthened, and that assessments of their capacity should be centrally maintained by UNHCR for internal purposes. Delegations noted support provided by UNHCR to implementing partners through training organized at the regional and local levels; a number of delegations stated that this effort benefiting implementing partners and local authorities needed to be increased, in particular with regard to refugee law.

8. Some delegations called attention to the need to fully respect the principle of equitable geographical distribution in contracting personnel, including those contracted on secondment.

9. Many delegations were concerned by the apparent lack of progress in the training of UNHCR staff. Several delegations stated that they were encouraged by the attention given by UNHCR to strategic planning; one delegation observed that UNHCR should ensure that its policies and guidelines were better reflected in its country programmes.

10. Some delegations regretted the use in the Spanish version of the report of the word intervención in reference to the participation of UNHCR in certain activities (paras. 4 and 5) and requested its replacement by the word participación. In this connection, they also requested that the words intervención rápida in paragraph 9 be replaced by the words respuesta rápida.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee expressed appreciation for the report, which it found to be comprehensive.

12. The Committee noted that its recommendations had helped UNHCR to improve its effectiveness.

13. The Committee recommended that the triennial review, together with the Committee's discussion and its conclusions and recommendations thereon, should be submitted to the Executive Committee of UNHCR for its consideration and appropriate action.

14. The Committee took note of the report and recommended that follow-up action on the issues raised in it should be taken by UNHCR and other relevant organizations, and that oversight review of those actions should be undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as appropriate, as part of its overall internal oversight function.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1995 and report of the twenty-ninth series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination

1. At its 11th and 12th meetings, on 10 June 1996, the Committee considered the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1995 (E/1996/18 and Add.1) and the report of the twenty-ninth series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, held on 16 October 1995 (E/1996/4 and Corr.1).

Discussion

2. The Committee focused its discussion on a number of issues, including the role of the Committee itself and the closely related issue of the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the Forum on the Future of the United Nations, African economic recovery and development, drug abuse control, the functioning of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and administrative questions.

3. Many delegations recognized the potential of the Administrative Committee on Coordination in strengthening the coordination of activities of the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular in the follow-up to

major international conferences through the establishment of ad hoc inter-agency task forces with timebound goals for the implementation of the outcomes of conferences.

4. Many delegations strongly reaffirmed the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in providing expert advice to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on programme and coordination issues of the United Nations and, in this context, strongly reiterated the need to strengthen the role of the Committee.

5. Other delegations questioned the usefulness of the Committee for Programme and Coordination as it presently operates and concluded that it needed to review its working procedures with a view to being more effective and efficient.

6. Many delegations strongly stressed the need to ensure that the organizations of the United Nations system receive all the resources needed for the implementation of their programmes of work, and urged all Member States, particularly the major contributor, to fulfil their financial commitments on time, in full and without conditions.

7. Many delegations regretted the abolition of the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. They also expressed their concern that this decision could have implications for the future role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination itself. They considered that the Committee was the only intergovernmental committee providing expert advice to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on coordination questions. Other delegations welcomed the decision to suspend the Joint Meetings and supported the proposal that the remaining coordination functions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination be moved to the Economic and Social Council.

8. In the discussions on the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, a number of members of the Committee expressed their appreciation for the effort undertaken by the Secretary-General in organizing the Forum on the Future of the United Nations. At the same time, several others expressed concern about some of the concepts discussed at the Forum, such as those related to regional groupings, new approaches to the concepts of security, new threats to peace and the involvement of civil society at the level of the decision-making process in the United Nations. In this context, they regretted that the Secretary-General included such concepts in the report, without having any mandates from the General Assembly.

9. Some delegations noted explanations made by the representative of the Secretariat that the Forum had been an event undertaken by the Secretary-General in observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, and that the issues raised at the Forum were part of an informal occasion of reflection and self-assessment covering a number of evolving new political, economic and social challenges in today's world, and did not represent decisions for the United Nations.

10. On the issue of African economic recovery and development, some delegations welcomed the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on

Africa and noted that it represented an operational arm of both the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. A number of members expressed concern about the omission of some key issues from the Special Initiative, such as, the issues of refugees in Africa, professional training, proliferation of mines and unemployment. Some delegations noted explanations made by the representative of the Secretariat that the Special Initiative did not include all priority areas, but rather included a number of specific areas where joint and/or coordinated action by several organizations of the United Nations system was possible.

11. Other delegations stressed the need for a coherent and coordinated effort by all the agencies of the United Nations system in the implementation of the Special Initiative. A number of delegations welcomed the active participation of the donor community in the Special Initiative, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions, and, in this regard, those members stressed the need to take immediate and concrete action.

12. On the subject of the follow-up to international conferences, members welcomed the establishment of the three inter-agency task forces based on the three interrelated themes of basic services for all (under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund), the enabling environment for social and economic development (with the World Bank as lead agency) and employment and sustainable livelihoods (with the International Labour Organization as lead agency). Other delegations regretted that insufficient attention had been paid to the objectives of these task forces or to an analysis of the results of their work so far. A number of Committee members, however, expressed concern that the financial resources required for adequate follow-up to major international conferences were being sharply reduced. Other members stressed the importance of making efficient use of the scarce resources available. Effectiveness should be enhanced and work prioritized.

13. On the same issue, several delegations reiterated the central role of each Government in coordinating the follow-up activities to the conferences, which has to be on the basis of national priorities and strategies.

14. On the issue of procedures for presenting reports, some delegations emphasized that no decisions should be taken unilaterally. In this regard, they stressed that any decision on this matter should be examined in the context of the overall review of publication policy.

15. Some delegations welcomed the detailed information contained in the report in connection with assistance provided by the organizations of the United Nations system to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations, and requested the Secretariat to continue to provide the Committee with further information on this matter in the future.

16. On the issue of international drug abuse control, a number of delegations stated that the issue of "drug demand" should also have been reflected in the report as part of the ongoing work by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in that area. In reply, some delegations noted explanations by the

representative of the Secretariat that this aspect of the problem had, in fact, been included in the United Nations system-wide activities on the subject, and would be adequately reflected in the report to the Economic and Social Council. He further informed the Committee that the issue of international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances and related activities was a priority issue for the organizations of the United Nations system, as evidenced by the fact that the issue was chosen as the topic to be discussed during the high-level segment of the 1996 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

17. On the issue of the coordination of operational activities for development, some delegations called for the strengthening of the resident coordinator system at the country level in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 50/120 of 20 December 1995, in particular with reference to the follow-up to major international conferences and the work of the ad hoc inter-agency task forces. Some delegations also requested that more information on the country strategy notes be included in future in the report.

18. With reference to the issue of access to resources, some delegations expressed the view that resources were becoming increasingly scarce and that it was, therefore, necessary for organizations of the United Nations system to focus more on how to better utilize scarce available resources. Other delegations were of the view that it was essential for organizations of the United Nations system to be able to have access to a predictable and adequate level of financial and human resources, if they were to be able to implement effectively their programmes of work.

19. With reference to administrative questions, many delegations disagreed with the proposals by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to change the composition of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). A number of delegations supported the concern expressed in the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination regarding the critical need to restore the competitive conditions of service of the professional staff of the organizations of the United Nations system in order to enable the organizations to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre. Other delegations, however, stated that they believed that the current conditions of service of staff were adequate and that evidence of recruitment and retention difficulties must be provided before any increase could be justified.

20. A number of delegations agreed with the statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system. They stressed the importance of increasing the number of women candidates for recruitment and promotion at all levels and of promoting and recruiting qualified women on a competitive basis, giving due regard to Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

Conclusions and recommendations

21. The Committee took note of the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the report of the twenty-ninth series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The Committee, nevertheless, stressed the need for documentation to be placed before the Committee with sufficient time to enable the Committee to study it, and for more information to be given on achievement by the Administrative Committee on Coordination of its objectives, to permit a better assessment of its effectiveness.

22. The Committee noted the efforts of the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, in the establishment and launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa early in 1996. The Committee also expressed the hope that the inter-agency task forces established to ensure improved coordination of the follow-up to international conferences, would take the Special Initiative into consideration in the implementation of their work.

23. The Committee, in stressing the importance of the continued attention by the Secretary-General to efforts of assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations, requested that information continue to be provided to it on this subject in the future.

24. The Committee stressed the need to provide the organizations of the United Nations system with adequate resources to implement their programmes of work, and also stressed the legal obligation of all Member States to fulfil their financial commitments on time and in full.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development

1. At its 12th to 14th meetings, on 10 and 11 June 1996, the Committee considered the progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (E/AC.51/1996/6 and Corr.1). In that connection, the Committee also considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF): Towards a More Operational Approach?" (A/50/885) and the comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon (A/50/885/Add.1).

Discussion

2. While pointing out that very little had been done to implement the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, many delegations welcomed the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa as an important vehicle for its implementation. They stated that the New Agenda as such had not been followed by action and found disturbing the information given in the JIU report that the New Agenda was little known at the field level. While many delegations acknowledged that the Special Initiative gave new impetus to the New Agenda as its operational wing, some expressed doubts at the impact of yet another initiative that might not be followed by action. Other

delegations emphasized that for the Special Initiative to succeed, it should not be imposed from outside, but must have strong African ownership and focus on practical and sustainable actions that reflected national priorities.

3. In the view of a number of delegations, the Special Initiative carried a complex message that would have a bearing on all levels inside Africa as well as within the donor community and the entire United Nations system. The Special Initiative should also be brought to the attention of the Group of Seven for its support. It could fill the programmatic weaknesses of the New Agenda and could constitute a valuable contribution to the sustainable development of Africa. It should build on economic reforms and lead to operational programmes by making optimal use of United Nations resources and closely coordinating all the United Nations bodies involved. The main prerequisites for its success were involvement of civil society, massive use of the media and convincing all the parties involved of the gains to be obtained. Some delegations expressed their hope that the Special Initiative would be successful, provided it was met by the necessary political will of the donor countries, and requested the presentation of an oral or written progress report to the Committee at its next session.

4. A number of delegations expressed appreciation for the work carried out at Headquarters by the units implementing Programme 45. Other delegations were not convinced that the present Secretariat structure was right and endorsed the JIU suggestion that it be reduced to a single liaison point. As regards the Inter-agency Task Force on African Economic Recovery and Development a delegation requested that the Committee be more informed on the Task Force and also that it should make a presentation to the Committee at its next session, and eventually be merged with other task forces of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

5. Whereas some delegations expressed appreciation for the progress report in that it established very well the linkage between the System-wide Plan of Action and the Special Initiative, some others questioned its usefulness, as it did not give any concrete information and contained no evidence that the System-wide Plan of Action had benefited Africa. They said that it just confirmed existing fears that the New Agenda had not been effective.

6. Some members asked whether any resources had already been mobilized for the implementation of the Special Initiative, and to what extent there would be additional resources rather than only redirection of resources. A number of delegations expressed concern at the proliferation of so many initiatives on Africa without having tangible results on the ground.

7. A number of delegations pointed out that the international community should seek the views of the African Governments and people in setting up programmes rather than imposing them. It was said that often funds were being used for items that were of no immediate use in the field, and that the solutions to the problems had to come from the Africans themselves. A number of delegations welcomed the intention of the donor community to take an active participation in the Special Initiative, and, in that regard, they stressed the need to take immediate and concrete actions. Each country should be able to set its own pace in establishing democracy. It was also important to provide resources to Africa without attaching stringent conditions to their use. Rather than telling

African countries what to do, they should be asked what they wanted to do because only people-centred development carried hope for peace and security.

8. Many delegations were grateful for the initiatives undertaken by some major donor countries, in particular Japan and France, to assist Africa. One delegation pointed out that coordination within the international community was still at a rather low level. While a lot of assistance was provided on a bilateral basis, foreign direct investment needed to be encouraged. It was necessary to make the development process sustained and sustainable.

9. Many delegations commended the JIU report, but several questioned some of its findings. Some delegations expressed concern about the report and considered some of the conclusions controversial, reminding the Committee of doubts expressed by some delegations about requesting a study at the Committee's thirty-fourth session. A delegation expressed concerns about the methodology used to produce the report. It was found lacking in detail: practically no figure was presented to assess the flow of resources and substantiate the conclusion. In addition, the methodology was also found lacking in balance. No contact had been organized by the inspectors with any donor Government or creditor. Other delegations found it an excellent, hard-hitting and clear report. Its findings were in some cases disturbing, but it was precisely because of its disturbing character that it fulfilled its purpose. Other delegations noted that some recommendations had financial implications that were even not mentioned in the report. Others noted a lack of recommendations for specific action. A number of delegations pointed out that the May 1996 Conference of Ministers of the States members of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) had not studied or endorsed any recommendation of the report. A draft resolution commending the report was withdrawn by the technical committee of the whole. Many delegations observed that various recommendations were made on purely political matters, which were outside the functions and powers of JIU, as recently reminded by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/233 of 7 June 1996 on JIU.

10. In the course of the debate, delegations made concrete observations on the following recommendations in the JIU report.

11. Recommendation 1 (b). While one delegation welcomed the idea of annual reporting by each organization of the United Nations system to its governing body, another delegation proposed that rather than asking the Administrative Committee on Coordination to report annually to the Economic and Social Council, Africa be covered in connection with specific topical discussions, such as poverty.

12. Recommendation 2:

(a) One delegation asked what was meant by JIU's recommendation that the organizations reduce their reliance on resident coordinators.

(c) One delegation questioned the pertinence of the last part of recommendation 2 (c) regarding the application of the norms and standards endorsed by African Member States.

13. Recommendation 3:

(a) One delegation welcomed the use of informatics for policy advocacy and awareness campaigns.

(b) Further clarification was requested on the suggestion that a United Nations system joint information service should be established in each United Nations Information Centre in Africa, and the proposal was considered unrealistic as the centres did not have enough resources to carry out the tasks foreseen. It was also suggested that the resident coordinator system could perhaps be used to disseminate information.

14. Recommendation 4 (a) and (b). While agreeing with recommendation 4 (a), some delegations asked what the role of the States would be in promoting the two umbrella projects mentioned, which office would be responsible for them and how they would be financed.

15. Recommendation 5:

(a) and (c) One delegation stressed the need for coordination among bilateral donors in support of Africa.

(a), (c) and (d) One delegation asked where the emphasis should be put in connection with inter-agency cooperation and coordination.

(c) Another delegation suggested that the responsibility for that should be with the Economic and Social Council.

(c) One delegation did not support the establishment of an African Development Conference or of a standing inter-agency working group on the commodity sector.

16. Recommendation 6 (e) (i). One member felt that it was up to the States, rather than the development organizations, to decide on the location of field offices, in order to avoid political implications.

17. Recommendation 7. Whereas one delegation suggested that reference be made to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action rather than to the African Platform for Action, another delegation emphasized that the African Platform for Action also maintained its validity after the Beijing Conference, particularly as its recommendations had been taken into account in formulating the global platform for action.

18. Recommendation 8 (a). Most delegations did not express support for this recommendation. A number of delegations underscored the outstanding work carried out by the Headquarters units of Programme 45, and expressed surprise at the recommendation to redirect resources allocated to these units to the Inter-agency Task Force on African Economic Recovery based at ECA. They requested and received an explanation on the statement in the report that 85 per cent of the resources allocated to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s were being used at Headquarters instead of in the field. It was stressed that the resources under Programme 45 were allocated

for policy formulation, mobilization of international support, advocacy and global awareness, and not for operational activities, which were supported under the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. One delegation welcomed the suggestion to replace Programme 45 in the next medium-term plan. This delegation expressed doubts about the restructuring of the ECA secretariat at such an early stage and advocated that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), rather than the Department for Development Support and Management Services, played a more prominent role in civil service and judicial reforms in Africa. Another delegation supported the suggestion made in the JIU report to reduce the Headquarters units to a liaison function.

19. Recommendation 9 (b). A number of delegations did not support the relocation of the United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in view of the financial and political implications.

20. Recommendation 10 (b). Some delegations gave no support to the setting up of the Pan-African Institute for Peace and Democracy, bearing in mind the operational cost factor.

21. Recommendation 11. One delegation took the view that the root causes of instability were poverty and lack of development.

22. Recommendation 12. One delegation expressed its reservations to this recommendation.

23. Recommendation 13 (b). One delegation questioned the practicality of the recommendation made in 13 (b) and suggested instead more frequent consultations.

24. Recommendation 14. Some delegations considered the recommendation out of context and untimely. One delegation wondered whether the recommendation was not contrary to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 105 concerning the abolition of forced labour. With reference to the use of development armies, one delegation felt that what was needed was to educate the military and seek preventive action in conflict situations.

Conclusions and recommendations

25. The Committee took note of the progress report on the implementation of the revised System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa launched on 15 March 1996 as the vehicle for implementing this system-wide plan. While welcoming the potential of the Special Initiative as an operational wing of, and a complement to the New Agenda focusing on a limited number of priority issues facing Africa, the Committee expressed strong concern about the prevailing trend to flood Africa with new initiatives that were hardly implemented. Noting that the organizations of the United Nations system, including, in particular, the World Bank, have committed themselves to working together, coordinating their efforts and pooling resources, making full use of their means for media awareness, through the Special Initiative, the Committee urged them to produce tangible results and requested that a report on the

implementation of the Special Initiative be submitted to it at its spring session in 1997 and thereafter, as it may decide.

26. The Committee took note of the report of JIU, which it found a useful basis for discussion, and of the comments of the Secretary-General and of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. It decided to endorse the following recommendations, subject to the observations made during the deliberations:

Recommendation 2

This recommendation is endorsed bearing in mind the need to maintain and reinforce the external control on the use of United Nations system funds involved.

Recommendation 4 (a)

Recommendation 4 (b)

(i) The words "recognized most competent on the basis of their previous achievements" were inserted after "private sectors".

Recommendation 5 (b)

The words "and commitments at the global level" were deleted.

Recommendation 6 (b), (d), (e) (ii)

Recommendation 6 (g)

The words "The organizations should replace" were replaced by the words "The organizations should aim at replacing".

Recommendation 7

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

COORDINATION QUESTIONS: PROPOSED SYSTEM-WIDE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, 1996-2001

1. At its .. meeting on 11 June, the Committee considered the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) on the proposed system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001 (E/1996/16). The Committee also had before it, for its information, resolution 40/10, adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fortieth session (11-22 March 1996), on the same subject (E/AC.51/1996/5, annex).

Discussion

2. Some delegations suggested that the words "under parental supervision" be inserted after the words "girls and boys" in line 6 of paragraph 92 of document E/1996/16.

3. In the section on women and health, in the same document, some delegations strongly objected to the reference to the term "individuals" in paragraphs 71 and 93, and insisted on the deletion of this word from the text since it was not agreed to in other forums.

4. One delegation questioned the relevance of the inclusion of the words "there should be complementarity between policy reform and direct intervention" in paragraph 23 of the document and requested their deletion since they seemed to be out of context.

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Conclusions and recommendations

5. The Committee welcomed the preparation of the second system-wide medium-term plan on the advancement of women and, aware of the indicative nature of the plan, appreciated the efforts of those United Nations entities that had contributed to its elaboration. It noted with appreciation that the plan, while following the structure of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, also included elements from other recent United Nations conferences and summits, and from other relevant intergovernmental mandates. The increased focus on system-wide collaboration and cooperation in the follow-up to conferences was commended.

6. The Committee supported and reiterated the extensive and thorough comments that had been adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women on the draft of the plan (resolution 40/10, annex). Those comments by the substantive body dealing with women and gender issues were considered to be a valuable input to the work of the Committee.

7. The Committee expressed its support for the system-wide mainstreaming of a gender perspective. Noting the valuable work done in that regard by the Commission on the Status of Women, it was stressed, however, that responsibility for mainstreaming was incumbent upon all United Nations machinery. It also expressed support for capacity-building for mainstreaming at the national level, particularly in developing countries. It recognized the catalytic role of the Division for the Advancement of Women in gender mainstreaming, and underscored the need to strengthen the capacity of the Division in implementing the Platform for Action and the system-wide plan.

8. The Committee agreed to ensure, in its examination of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, that the mainstreaming of a gender perspective was reflected in the individual programmes of the medium-term plan. It emphasized the responsibility of programme managers for progress in gender mainstreaming. The Committee took note of the proposal that international legal instruments concerning the protection of women receive priority ratification by Member States.

9. In the light of its joint responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the system-wide plan, and the anticipated mid-term review to be conducted by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council in 1998, the Committee agreed to conduct a progress review at some stage during the next four years, preferably in 1998, or in 2000. It also noted that the Commission on the Status of Women was expected to monitor annually progress in the implementation of the plan within the framework of its long-term programme of work.

10. The Committee stressed the need for a coordinated and collaborative approach by the United Nations system in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, and for an integrated approach in the follow-up to all recent United Nations conferences and summits. At the same time, the Committee underlined the individual responsibility and accountability of agencies for implementing those parts of the Platform and the system-wide plan falling within their specific

mandate. It also stressed the necessity of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the planning and programming of all United Nations agencies. It commended the plan's emphasis on avoiding overlapping and duplication of efforts. It emphasized the need to refine and improve research and data collection.

11. The Committee took note of the recent establishment of a standing ACC committee on women and gender issues, and of its role in the implementation of the system-wide plan and reporting thereon. The importance of being able to monitor progress against agreed indicators was noted as being important for the proper implementation of the plan. The Committee also recognized that some of the issues raised on its implementation would be taken up in that context. It expressed support for the efforts undertaken by the Senior Adviser to the Secretary-General on gender issues.

12. Reiterating the comments made in the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee stressed that the plan should be more strategic and include outputs that could be measured and properly evaluated at the end of the period covered by the plan, rather than a list of activities to be undertaken. It emphasized that all departments of the United Nations Secretariat had a role in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action.

13. The Committee agreed that greater emphasis needed to be placed on outputs and results to be achieved from the implementation of the activities contained in the plan. In that regard, it observed the absence of benchmarks for assessing progress in implementation and it agreed that future revisions to the plan must redress that omission.

14. The Committee recommended that consideration be given to the desirability of designating lead agencies in activities where there was a multitude of participating entities in order to avoid duplication of efforts. It underlined the critical importance of interaction between research and operational activities, and consequently between research-oriented United Nations bodies and operational entities.

15. The Committee underlined the important role of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in implementing the Platform for Action. Consequently, and to the extent possible, the plan should pay more attention to their role. It should also reflect additional measures for sharing responsibilities between men and women as a component of implementation.

16. The Committee agreed that, in outlining technical and other assistance to developing countries, the plan should be more focused to ensure that useful and practical assistance was provided. It highlighted the need to use agreed language from conferences.

17. The Committee recommended that various intergovernmental bodies study the system-wide plan, noting that comments in addition to those of the Commission on the Status of Women would constitute valuable input into the implementation of the plan.

18. Referring to particular sections of the system-wide plan, as well as to comments adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee made the following observations.

Women and poverty

19. The Committee reiterated the need to focus attention on the underlying causes of women's poverty, and that resources allocated to development policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty should not be diverted to emergency relief assistance. It emphasized the need for participation of all relevant entities, including regional commissions, in addressing poverty. Insufficient attention was being paid to the situation of rural women in the section on women and poverty and throughout the plan.

20. The relevance of commitments 2 and 10 of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, as well as paragraph 25 of chapter II of the Programme of Action of the Summit, to poverty eradication efforts within the framework of the plan was emphasized.

Women and health

21. The Committee emphasized the need to update the language in the section on women and health to reflect accurately the language from the International Conference on Population and Development and the Platform for Action. It stressed the need to reaffirm the principle of women's equal access to health services. It expressed concern at the lack of attention given to gender and HIV/AIDS and to female genital mutilation. It noted the role of adult education in eliminating female genital mutilation.

Violence against women

22. The Committee expressed support for operational activities in the prevention and elimination of violence against women, and for further collaboration and exchange of information among United Nations entities active in this area. The impetus provided by the Beijing Conference to address violence against women should be more fully used by all actors. The recently established Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women in the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/166 of 22 December 1995, should be utilized to support operational activities that are consistent with the proposed actions in the system-wide plan. Additional efforts to address violence against women migrant workers could be envisaged.

Women and the economy

23. The Committee welcomed initiatives to study gender aspects with regard to export processing zones and special economic zones.

Women in power and decision-making

24. Noting the continuing underrepresentation of women in managerial and decision-making posts in the United Nations system, the Committee underlined the

need to expand opportunities for women to fill vacancies. Notwithstanding annual resolutions of the General Assembly on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, agreed goals remained to be achieved. It was also pointed out that the equal treatment of women in appointment and promotion must be in accordance with Article 101.3 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Human rights of women

25. The Committee welcomed efforts to support the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and of relevant International Labour Organization conventions. It also encouraged efforts to strengthen the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Women and the media

26. Activities relating to paragraph 243 (f) of the Platform for Action should be envisaged in the plan.

Institutional arrangements

27. The Committee expressed support for the need to develop further methods for accountability and evaluation of progress in implementing the Platform for Action and eliminating gender discrimination, particularly at the field level, but also at the policy level.

28. The Committee welcomed the particular role accorded to regional commissions in implementation, and pointed out the comparative advantage of regional and subregional offices in providing support to Governments. Furthermore, it underlined the desirability of increased regional cooperation among United Nations agencies. The lack of information in the system-wide plan on activities of the Economic Commission for Africa was a cause for concern.

Financial arrangements

29. The Committee recommended that consideration be given to the preparation of a table showing actual and pledged resources in support of implementation of the activities in the plan. Recognizing the indicative nature of the plan, efforts should be made by the implementing agencies to provide more specific information, including an assessment of the level of allocated resources, during the course of the review of the plan.

30. Regarding resource mobilization for the purpose of implementing the Platform within the framework of the consensus reached at the Conference, the Committee noted that due account needed to be given to existing regulations and rules concerning the redeployment of resources. It underlined the primary responsibility of Governments for implementing the Platform for Action.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

A. Accountability, management improvement and oversight in the United Nations system

1. At its 8th to 10th meetings, on 6 and 7 June 1996, the Committee considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Accountability, management improvement and oversight in the United Nations system" (A/50/503 and Add.1).

Discussion

2. Delegations expressed their appreciation to JIU for a good and timely report tackling an extremely complex, but very important, problem addressing mounting concerns of Member States. Many delegations expressed appreciation and broad agreement with this first comprehensive and wide-ranging study and its recommendations. Others pointed to the abstract and general character of the report, leading in certain cases to recommendations of a general nature, as well as to the lack of a comprehensive approach to management improvement within the United Nations system. One delegation thought that was inevitable owing to the nature of the report, while another considered it as a historic base-line for possible future studies. In view of General Assembly resolution 50/233 of 7 June 1996 on JIU, delegations noted that the report was voluminous and urged the Unit to observe the limits established in that resolution.

3. Satisfaction was expressed regarding the system-wide positive trend highlighted in the report of the enhancement of the role of oversight bodies and the distinct roles of internal and external oversight bodies in the work of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. One delegation emphasized that the report confirmed that agencies and organizations should adopt the Office of Internal Oversight Services model, which had proved its worth in the United Nations Secretariat. Another delegation disagreed with that opinion. Some other delegations expressed the opinion that the Office of Internal Oversight Services mandate extended only to the Secretariat and that other bodies of the United Nations system had to adopt their own system of accountability, management improvement and oversight. In that context, those delegations reiterated the independence of each body and the Organization and also emphasized that the scope of application of the Office of Internal Oversight Services was restricted to the United Nations Secretariat. Other delegations regretted the inclusion of managerial concepts in the report (para. 153), which might be considered as promotion of private sectors within the Organization. Those delegations expressed their deep concern at that kind of suggestion, emphasizing the political, universal and intergovernmental character of the Organization, which did not allow it to apply that managerial consideration in its work. Other delegations noted that even intergovernmental bodies needed to be well managed. One delegation highlighted the report's finding that those organizations that had been the most dynamic in pursuing management reforms were those that were funded voluntarily or had had severe funding cuts. The same delegation also indicated that additional resources were not necessarily the solution to management reform, while another delegation was not in agreement with that view.

4. With regard to section VII of the report, many delegations highlighted the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in administrative and budgetary questions and expressed their satisfaction with the work done by the Committee and its secretariat, which was highly recognized. In that context, those delegations refused the suggestions of the Inspectors in paragraph 187 of the report regarding possible change in the working procedures of the Committee, which they believed should be maintained as it was. On the question of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, those delegations strongly supported the role of the Committee as the principal subsidiary body of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with a programme planning and coordination mandate. They also recognized the role of JIU as the only independent system-wide inspection, evaluation and investigation body and in that regard strongly supported its work. Others expressed reservations about the usefulness of the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination given the way it currently functioned and reiterated their support for the proposal to move the Committee's coordination function to the Economic and Social Council. They also noted their intention to consider more fully the role of the Committee, JIU and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in the context of the review of the oversight bodies called for by the General Assembly in its decision 47/454 of 23 December 1992.

5. Recommendation 1. Some delegations supported the recommendation and considered the establishment of the proposed strategic unit to be important, whereas others were of the view that it would have undesirable financial implications by establishing an additional layer of bureaucracy, probably on the

scale of a division. They thought that the tasks of strategic planning and improvement in management and accountability should be pursued through existing services such as departments' executive offices, the Department of Administration and Management and the Office of Internal Oversight Services. One delegation emphasized that while the proposed unit had excessively broad functions, the establishment of an office of strategic planning should be supported. Another delegation pointed out to a contradiction in the terms of reference of the proposed unit, which was to encompass both management and oversight functions, and noted the lack of focus in that idea. In regard to "benchmarking", one delegation noted that the choice of criteria should reflect a diverse experience of Member States in regard to the standards of performance.

6. Recommendation 2 was widely supported, while some delegations criticized its general nature.

7. Recommendation 3 was supported, although some delegations noted that it is too general. One delegation underlined the importance of adopting and enforcing a code of conduct of international civil service.

8. Recommendation 4 was supported and the importance of an effective information systems strategy was underscored.

9. Recommendation 5 was supported, with delegations emphasizing the importance of consistent development of comprehensive management training and career development systems. In that connection, some delegations noted the JIU observation in paragraph 111 that in large agencies with sizeable training programmes, funds had traditionally been oriented towards language training, and emphasized that the shortage of funds should not prevent the development of training beyond the languages area.

10. Recommendation 6. This recommendation found general support from the Committee.

11. Recommendation 7. Most delegations expressed support for this recommendation, although one delegation questioned its meaning.

12. Recommendation 8. Some delegations found this recommendation somewhat obscure and that it mixed the objectives of sound management to be pursued by all programme managers and intergovernmental follow-up of programme performance.

13. Recommendation 9 was supported by many delegations, whereas others questioned the need for a separate annual report. Some delegations also found that it was unclear to whom such a report should be presented.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. The Committee regretted that the comments of the Secretary-General and of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the JIU report were not available at the time the Committee commenced its consideration of the report. It reiterated that relevant comments of the Secretary-General and of the participating organizations were clearly mandated in the relevant resolutions of

the General Assembly and translated in the statute of the JIU. It requested the Secretariat to make every effort in order to meet the deadlines for offering detailed comments on JIU reports and to ascertain that comments of the Secretary-General and of the executive heads of the participating organizations on the Unit reports selected for consideration by the Committee for Programme and Coordination be issued on time in all the official languages of the United Nations.

15. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the report and endorsed its recommendations 2 to 6, subject to the reservations expressed in paragraphs 5-10 above.